

1-14. (CANCELED)

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An access unit for covering an opening in an upper floor, the access unit comprising:

a support frame having a generally O-shaped configuration with an open central region, the support frame including U-shaped first and second members with an open end of each U-shaped configuration facing one another, each of the first and the second members comprises a base frame defining one end of the open central region, and a pair of spaced apart side arms extending parallel to one another from opposite ends of the base frame; the pair of side arms of the first member being telescopically received within the pair of side arms of the second member to facilitate adjustment of a length of the open central region; and the open central region, defined by the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the first member and the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the second member, being completely unobstructed and open without anything being located between the base frames for the first and the second members so as to allow unhindered passage of a person through the open central region, and the telescopic adjustment of the pair of spaced apart side arms facilitates desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member over a range of distances; and each of the spaced apart side arms of the second member having a clamp for temporary securing of the side arms of the first member to the side arms of the second member at a pre-determined relationship and maintaining the desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member;

the second member having a pair of spaced apart adjustable props which are pivotably attached adjacent the base frame of the second member for supporting the second member at a desired level;

the base frame of the first member being adapted for position at a first location and the base frame of the first member has a flange for overlying a support

surface at the first location to facilitate retaining the base frame of the first member at the first location; and

the pair of spaced apart adjustable props facilitate positioning of the base frame of the second member at substantially a same level as the base frame of the first member so as to position the support frame of the access unit within a stairwell in a substantially horizontal orientation.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, wherein a length of each adjustable prop is variable to facilitate maintaining the access unit in one of a horizontal orientation and at a desired angle relative to horizontal.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, further comprising a removable platform member for covering the open central region, when the platform member is in a first working position, and preventing passage of one of the person and an article located above the support unit from inadvertently passing through the open central region; and

the platform member, when the platform member is in a second position removed from the open central region, allowing unimpeded passage of at least one of the person and the article through the open central region.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 17, wherein the platform member is at least in part of open construction to enable viewing through the open central region when the platform member is in the first working position.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 17, wherein a length of each of the pair of spaced apart side arms of the first member is greater than a length the base frame of the first member.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The access unit according to claim 15, wherein a space between the base frame of the first member and the base frame of the second member is completely unobstructed, a space between the opposed legs of the

first member is completely unobstructed, and a space between the opposed legs of the second member is completely unobstructed.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An access unit for covering an opening in an upper floor, the access unit comprising:

a support frame having a generally oval shaped configuration with a completely unobstructed open central region, the support frame including U-shaped first and second members with an open end of each of the first and the second U-shaped members facing one another, each of the first and the second members comprises a base frame defining one end of the open central region, and a pair of spaced apart side arms extending parallel to one another from opposite ends of the base frame; the pair of side arms of the first member being telescopically received within the pair of side arms of the second member to facilitate adjustment of a length of the open central region; and the open central region, defined by the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the first member and the base frame and the pair of spaced apart side arms of the second member, being completely unobstructed and open without anything being located between the opposed legs of the first and the second members and without anything being located between the base frames for the first and the second members so as to allow unhindered passage of a person through the open central region;[[, and]]

the telescopic adjustment of the pair of spaced apart side arms facilitates desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member; and at least one of the spaced apart side arms having a clamp for temporary securing of the side arms of the first member and the side arms of the second member to one another at a pre-determined relationship and maintaining the desired spacing of the base frame of the first member from the base frame of the second member;

the base frame of the first member has a flange for overlying the upper floor defining the opening therein to facilitate retaining the base frame of the first member within the opening at a level of the upper floor;

the second member having a pair of spaced apart adjustable props which are pivotably attached adjacent the base frame of the second member for supporting the second member at ~~a desired level~~ the level of the upper floor;

the pair of spaced apart adjustable props facilitate positioning of the base frame of the second member within a stairwell in a substantially horizontal orientation relative to the upper floor;

a brace connects each of the adjustable props with one of the side arms of the second member; and

a removable platform member for overlying the upper floor and covering both the opening and the open central region, when the platform member is in a first working position, and preventing passage of one of a person and an article located above the support unit from inadvertently passing through the open central region; and the platform member, when the platform member is in a second position removed from the open central region, allowing unimpeded passage of at least one of the person and the article through the open central region.

22. (NEW) A constructional unit comprising:

a support frame which is O-shaped in plan bounding an open central region, the support frame including first and second members which are each U-shaped in plan, each of the first and the second members being in the form of a base frame from which extend two side arms and an open end of each of the first and the second U-shaped members facing one another;

the first and the second members each having their side arms telescopically engaged to define sides to the open central region of the O-shaped support frame;

the telescopic engagement providing for the spacing of the first base frame from the second base frame to be adjustable over a range of distances and for the temporary securing of the first member to the second member at a predetermined spacing;

the base frame of the first member being provided with non-extensible means whereby the base frame is located at a first level at a first working location; the second member being adapted for location at a second working location off-set from the first working location, by means of at least one extensible leg, the, or each, extensible leg being pivotally attached at or near one end of the leg to the base frame of the second member or to a side arm thereof;

the opposite end to the one end of the, or each, extensible leg being adapted for location vertically below the first level.

23. (NEW) The constructional unit according to claim 22, wherein the, or each, extensible leg is provided with a prop with first and second ends, the first end of the prop being attachable to the extensible leg telescopic, the second end of the prop being attachable to the second member, the prop in use providing for a fixed angular alignment of the leg relative to the second member.

24. (NEW) The constructional unit according to claim 22, wherein a platform member is provided to which, in a first working configuration, serves to cover the open central region of the support frame so as to prevent the inadvertent passage of an article or person through the open central region and a second working configuration wherein the platform member is withdrawn to allow access through the open central region.

25. (NEW) The constructional unit according to claim 24, wherein the platform member is, at least in part, of openwork construction to enable a view to be obtained through the open central region, when the platform member is in the first working configuration.